

Saturday 27th November 2021, commencing **10:30am**

Via Zoom Webinar

Panel: George Stephenson (Chair, Angling Trust)
George Graham (Chair, Fish Legal)
Jamie Cook (Chief Executive Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)
Roland Caley (Chief Operating Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)

Minutes

Welcome from the Angling Trust Chair (George Stephenson)

'Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen – and welcome to this virtual Subscriber Members Annual General Meeting of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. I am George Stephenson, Chairman of the Angling Trust and I have on the panel with me here George Graham (Chair Fish Legal), Jamie Cook (CEO AT and FL), and Roland Caley (COO AT and FL). Not on the panel, but very much the boss of proceedings, Karen Watkinson (Governance Manager) to whom many thanks for making this virtual meeting possible and Alastair Middleton for all his technical assistance.

Whilst I am sorry that we are unable to meet in person today – the success of last year's Virtual AGM and the enduring high case load of Covid 19 infections persuaded us that this year's AGM should also be held virtually – on the plus side it at least means we can go fishing this afternoon, rather than facing the delights of the M42!

Anyway, it's great to see so many of you attending this meeting today, thank you for joining us – we have a full programme and I would like to advise you that in order to facilitate minute taking we are recording the meeting. I would also like to emphasise that although we have done this before, technology can have its glitches, so please bear with us should things not go quite according to plan! Equally, if you are having issues with connectivity please feel free to log out and rejoin. As you will have seen on the agenda, following the official business of the Angling Trust Meeting, and any questions, I will hand over to George Graham, to take us through the Fish Legal Meeting, where again, following any questions, he will then hand over to our Chief Executive, Jamie Cook, who will show a few short films to showcase a selection of our activities and campaigns over the past year and then answer any questions that arise thereon.

On the subject of questions, you will see the "Q & A" box on your screen – please feel free to ask questions of the panel – we will attempt to answer as many as we can in the time provided – should we run out of time, don't worry we will answer your questions and post them up online alongside the minutes of the meeting.

Since our meeting a year ago, our country endured another depressing winter of Covid and the dreaded restrictions that impacted nearly everyone. Many people lost loved ones and whilst our vaccine programme has helped, the current situation in mainland Europe highlights the ongoing struggle that we face living with Covid, both now and I suspect in the future.

However, with my Angling Trust Chair's hat on, I would like to reiterate what I said last year, that thanks to the proactive leadership and concerted effort of all of us at the Angling Trust and Fish Legal, we have achieved for our Members, and the wider fishing community, something that other sports and Governing bodies are very envious of – with Sport England commenting that we were having a

positive and direct impact on behalf of our sport, through the lobbying that we undertook. We led from the front, we reached out and consulted with anglers countrywide, we worked directly with Government departments and supportive MPs, and convinced them and the wider Government that by adhering to certain protocols our sport could safely continue at a time when others could not! We did what a National Governing Body should do and stood up for our sport and our Members, many of whom have contacted us with poignant stories of the positive impact fishing has had on their lives in these difficult times. At a time when anglers needed a single, powerful voice we stepped up and if ever there was an advert for why we need an Angling Trust this was it.

I could list any number of individuals, right through the organisation and thank them for their sterling efforts on behalf of the Angling community – but I believe it was a team effort, from the Board, the management, the staff and volunteers, with Jamie (Captain Cook) as helmsman, and as such, personally and on your behalf, I thank the entire team – all Angling Trust staff and volunteers for a phenomenal achievement – thank you! It has led to significantly more people taking up fishing – more rod licences sold – and importantly more anglers joining the Angling Trust.

But this is no time for complacency – we might be the poster boys of Sports Governing bodies for achieving what we did – for our part we must capitalise on our success – we must make the most of the prodigious talent that we have in our organisation. I will touch on the accounts in a minute, but I'm sure you will have noted that with the growth in Membership and thus income so our investment in what we offer, both in services and activities, has grown significantly, making a big difference to anglers across the board and of all denominations. Our partnerships have grown stronger and over the past few years we have invested significantly into the Canal & River Trust's Let's Fish programme and Get Hooked on Fishing's various initiatives to encourage more people to fish.

I see a very exciting future for the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. For that to continue we must embrace the many new members who have joined our organisation. Through innovation, collaboration and hard work we must develop a closer relationship with any potential sponsors, influencers and allies. We must appeal to and educate young people in the ways of fish and fishing. We must continue to fight to protect our waterways, our sea and our fish stocks. And of course, very importantly, we must not be afraid to diversify and reach out further to persuade all anglers, whether they be sea anglers, game anglers, course anglers, competition anglers, specialist anglers, and even non anglers that by supporting us they are not only strengthening the voice of Angling, but ensuring that the sport we all love is handed on to future generations in a better state than ever.

This positive and wholly transparent outlook is recorded in our finances as published in our accounts and touched on briefly in our recently released and excellent "Angler" magazine, which I hope you have had a chance to enjoy.

As I have said already, the significant surplus created by increased membership has meant that we are able to focus on expanding delivery across a number of areas, specifically targeted towards our membership and potential members.

As a result of this investment, I hope members agree that we have improved our communications, particularly in relation to all the hard work we are doing for angling and on the benefits of club and individual membership, both of which, as noted, have seen increased subscriptions.

As I said earlier more details on our finances can be found both in the Angler magazine and in the accounts which we have published on the website. Our accounts today bear little resemblance to those of the early days of the Angling Trust, and at this point Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to express my own and the organisation's huge thanks to our Chief Operating Officer Roland Caley. Roland is sadly leaving us to go and work for the Rivers Trust, but I can safely say that without him none of this would have been possible. His prudence and hard work, aligned with his great sense of humour and humility

have put the Angling Trust and Fish Legal on a secure platform from which to move forwards in the coming years. Many thanks Roland and we wish you all the very best in your new job.

Speaking of good work ethic – your Board of Directors – who as volunteers give freely of their time, their experience and their knowledge – for which I salute them unreservedly and wholeheartedly – thank you Directors – have seen a couple of additions since this time last year. John Ellis and Neville Fickling were both nominated by the membership last year and have made a very active contribution to Board proceedings – thank you John and Neville.

At this point I must also announce that after nine years as your Chair (it only feels like 3!), the time has come for someone else to take on the role, and this will be my last AGM as Chair. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with both Angling Trust and Fish Legal. I couldn't possibly list all the interesting, talented people I have met and worked with during my time - but it is safe to say I have developed some good friendships and great fishing buddies, and learnt a lot about all things fishy! The Angling Trust has come a long way in the past nine years and I am proud to have played a small part in that development. Board Members, Executives and Volunteers alike, again I salute and thank you all for what you have achieved and what you are looking to achieve in the future.

To anyone who might consider applying for the role themselves, or know someone else who they think might be suitable, I would strongly encourage you to read the Recruitment article in the Angler magazine. Furthermore, I would be only too happy to have an informal conversation to discuss the role, if anyone wanted to get it from the horse's mouth as it were. It is a great honour to have led one of the most active volunteering communities in the UK, which happens also to represent a sport that I love. Thank you very much.

*Before moving on to any questions we have a couple of resolutions that need to be addressed and signed off. Normally a show of hands would suffice, but I'm afraid that today we have to follow zoom protocol. We have two resolutions to sign off – the first being to accept last year's minutes as being a true reflection of our meeting on 28 November 2020. **[Approved – 29 votes in favour, 5 abstentions, zero against]**. The second resolution involves a minor amendment to our rules, subject to minor changes as suggested by one of our members, which have been communicated to you. **[Approved – 33 votes in favour, 4 abstentions, zero against]** - Thank you for your cooperation.*

We now have time for any questions. Please use the Q&A function to ask questions. I do have one question which was asked in advance, which I will read out in full and ask Jamie Cook, our CEO, to answer:'

Question from Jason Gunn (3 November 2021): I would like to add a point to the Agenda of the forthcoming AGM. That point is “open and transparent accounting”.

Accountability and openness is core to a trust and how it runs itself. The Angling trust should Publish it's detailed account year-on-year.

This year rumours of monies going missing have been rife through Members of the Angling community. People do not understand why some competitions are receiving such poor pay-outs. Perhaps the most frustrating thing is that some of these competitions are huge and yet the rewards are minor.

The Angling trust need to be completely open and transparent with their accounts. Every business trust or charity has expenses but is the love of the people that determine how much they are used or abused.

Therefore, it would be advantageous to the Trust and all it's members to publish a full set of detailed accounts year on year.

This would put a stop to all the rumours that are flying around and also would highlight anybody who is perhaps going a bit far and funding their lifestyle at the expense of the Angling trust.

May I ask that this email is also passed on directly to CEO Jamie Cook *[passed on 03/11/2021]*.

Answered by Jamie Cook: Thanks to Jason for the question. The Trust accounts are completely open and transparent. They are available on the website and through the Angler. It is part of the Code for Sports Governance that they have to be and they will remain so. The inference in the question relates specifically to competitions so I will focus on that sphere. We made a clear commitment at the start of 2021 to do something we had not historically done, which was to publish the profit and loss for every national competition we run. We have been asked why we don't do it for every single competition and the answer is that we can only control the events that we have autonomy over and where we work with third parties it would be inappropriate for us to share financial information that is relevant to their businesses. I am pleased to announce that following a meeting last week, moving into 2022, a further tranche of our events where we partner with the Canal & River Trust will have the same scrutiny and transparency as our own national events. Thanks to John Ellis, AT Board director, for agreeing to that process and we will work together moving forward.

In answer to the question of monies going missing, this year we published detailed profits and loss for each national competition. They are available now on the website. We sent out a specific news item and shared the details.

In relation to large events with poor pay-outs, what we need to do is break down the preconceived idea that somehow, as a not-for-profit organisation with volunteer directors who give up their time for free, that somehow money is being syphoned off, because it is not. We have nothing to hide, which is why we have been open and transparent around our accounts. When you take the example that was covered most on social media, the Division One National, you can work those accounts quite simply. As a National Governing Body we have a view of trying to make competition angling accessible and open for everyone within our society. There are very few sports where you can enter the national championships whether you are male or female, able-bodied or disabled, 18 or 80 and compete on a level playing field for level prize money and level points. We have become acutely aware of that by working through Sport England's new Strategy. By keeping entry levels low for national competitions, by definition, without external sponsorship, it means that prize funds are comparatively low, when compared to large externally run commercial events where there is a commercial imperative, either around the venue or the brands that support them. We don't have any additional revenue from ancillary tackle or bait sales associated with our events. Whilst it is under review and we are looking at ways to bring further external funding into our competitions, the break down for Division Two or Division One Nationals is:


- A cost of £20 effectively per individual or £200 for a team entry fee, of which £5 (25%) is a peg fee, paid to the hosting club;
- Contribution paid to 40 stewards (circa £3000)
- £2000 plus for the prize pool

There is very little left over. The reason we decided to publish annually, not after each individual event, is that we run some events that make losses. In order to support the breadth of our national competitions across different disciplines for all within society, we run events that are not attractive commercially, but we balance that to ensure that the events continue to run to give different styles of angling and different individuals opportunities to compete at the highest level.

On the financial accounting point, if you take branch accounts for our competitions team and you look at all of the activities: 5 full-time members of staff; 250+ events; 30+ International Team England teams.

If you take a single member who joins the Angling Trust and buys at least one ticket to a competition a year and take every penny of their membership fee and put into that branch of the accounts; then look at the cost of salaries and the overheads to run and deliver competitions; it takes an additional investment of over £120k per year from the Angling Trust to deliver the competitions programme. The idea that money has been taken out of competitions for investment into other areas couldn't be further from the truth. The delivery is subsidised by working with partners who share our focus in providing a competitive infrastructure, from grassroots anglers fishing local rivers and canals through to elite participants representing their country and make us proud.

I am all for increased transparency and I hope people have seen that this year when they have looked at the detail. If anyone would like more details, they are available on the website or they are welcome to email me directly and I will send the link.

The following  questions were both asked and answered in the meeting:

Question from Neil Berry: What is the Angling Trust's approach to the Animal Rights (Sentience) Bill?

Answered by Jamie Cook: This is an area of concern and an example of why it is so important to have a strong representative voice for the sport. It came initially from a research piece from the Prime Minister's wife, or an organisation supported by her. We reacted immediately and leveraged political contacts to write a rebuttal that was sent directly to the Prime Minister, in the name of Jamie Cook, with the work of Stuart Singleton-White, Martin Salter and Mark Owen from our senior team using evidence to dispel the position. This was then circulated and lobbied via the All Party Parliamentary Group for Angling plus other political routes to ensure that should it come forward and should there be an impact around angling, we can offset that and ensure that it is combatted. This is the type of threat to our sport that exists and without a strong representative voice we have no means of combatting it.

There is a huge ramification for the Animal Sentience Bill if it applied in the wrong way. Martin Salter appeared alongside George Eustace and gave a presentation at the Conservative Party Conference. We have also worked with both ministers and the House of Lords. We have looked at the previous time this was raised, when Ben Bradshaw MP was the Fisheries Minister in the early 2000's and have referenced the work he did to explain to the current government the consistency in policy. We need to continue to portray the benefits of our sport to physical health and mental wellbeing to a huge number in society and our ability to reach under-represented groups. There are clearly challenges remaining around animal sentience and we need to thank our membership for supporting our campaigning work, which is solely funded by membership income. Individual members make a direct difference to our ability to lobby on these points. More information can be provided on request by our Campaigns team.

'Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen for your excellent questions.'

Now that we have concluded the formal part of the Angling Trust Subscriber Members meeting I'd like to thank you once again for your support – and I hope you enjoy the rest of the proceedings! I will now hand over to George Graham who will introduce the Fish Legal Meeting.'

Angling Trust Subscriber AGM 2020 - Ends

Saturday 27th November 2021, commencing 11:00am

Via Zoom Webinar

Panel: George Graham (Chair, Fish Legal)
George Stephenson (Chair, Angling Trust)
Jamie Cook (Chief Executive Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)
Roland Caley (Chief Operating Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)

Minutes

Welcome from the Fish Legal Chair (George Graham)

'Thank you George, and thank you all for joining us today. Thank you most of all for your support for our organisation.

We will come on to the formal business of the meeting around our last financial year, but before that, we need to talk about sewage – I hope no-one is still eating their breakfast.

As anglers, we are – regrettably – all too familiar with sewage. As our case files at Fish Legal show, too many water companies continue to discharge untreated or partially treated waste into our rivers, streams and coastlines. We currently have 24 cases on our books involving water company sewage-related pollution.

In 2018 we highlighted a list of 12 potentially problematic treatment works to the Environment Agency for further investigation during their 'strategic monitoring review', using these local examples to illustrate systemic failures in wastewater treatment. What happened? The Agency asked the water companies what was going on at the works in question and the water companies responded that they had not identified any significant operational issues. That was the end of it! No further investigation by the Environment Agency.

This year, the issue has caught on with the general public. We have joined with other groups such as the Rivers Trust and Surfers against Sewage to press for changes to the Environment Bill. We didn't get everything we wanted, but there are some real positive elements in the resulting Environment Act. Of course, as always, the detail will be critical, and so will the appetite and funding for real enforcement. Given past experience, we can't be confident on either of those fronts, but I don't think the government can now doubt whether voters care about having sewage dumped in their rivers.

And I am tempted to say that the Environment Agency and Ofwat now seem to understand this, since they have announced that they now plan to investigate more than 2,000 sewage works.

My worry here is that the Agency's usual practice during an investigation is to shut down all information-sharing. But it can often take four, five or six years to bring those investigations to a conclusion, and sometimes that conclusion is that they won't prosecute. In the meantime, our access – the public's access – to discharge data that we are entitled to receive under the Environmental Information Regulations will be cut off. This must not be allowed to happen.

I hope you have all received your copies of the Angler magazine. There are some good news stories in there about cases where we have been able to secure compensation for our members – for clubs such as Over Hulton Angling Club or Antrim and District Angling Association – to help them to restore fish stocks in their waters after the devastating impact of a pollution incident.

But I also highlighted in my report there that we are increasingly having to take government agencies in all parts of the United Kingdom to court for failing to live up to their responsibilities.

Next Friday our lawyers will be in the appeals court in Scotland fighting to maintain the judgment we secured against the Scottish Government's refusal even to trial more sustainable inshore fishing practices instead of environmentally damaging bottom-trawled fishing gear. It is, frankly, astonishing that the Scottish Government is spending public money to ensure that a pilot plan for more sustainable fishing cannot happen.

These cases are complex. They can take years to bring to a conclusion, and tens of thousands of pounds not just of our own work but of outside experts and lawyers. We have had a good hit rate, and costs recouped on cases we have won contributed to a solid financial surplus in the year to March 2021. That year's numbers also included the significant legacy from our member Peter Howse, which I noted at last year's AGM.

But we don't always win; and that can mean we have to pay costs to the other side.

That is why your support, and the fighting fund we have built up over the years, are critical. The Fish Legal Committee closely monitors our exposures and I am pleased to say that strong financial markets have helped us to grow the fund to over £1.5 million, up by half from two years ago.

While we are talking about numbers, can I express my thanks to Roland Caley, who has served as our Treasurer for the last six years, and who is leaving us shortly. Without Roland we wouldn't have such a clear picture of what the numbers are. Thankyou Roland.

Now to the formal business of the meeting.

The questions being put to you are:

- *Approval of the minutes of last year's meeting; [Approved – 32 votes in favour, 7 abstentions, zero against]*
- *The re-election of the existing committee; [Approved – 37 votes in favour, 2 abstentions, zero against]*
- *The adoption of the accounts for the last financial year; [Approved – 36 votes in favour, 3 abstentions, zero against]*
- *The re-appointment of our auditors, Adkin Sinclair. [Approved – 37 votes in favour, 2 abstentions, zero against]*

Thank you very much for your support for those motions. Thank you most of all for your continuing support for Fish Legal. Without you we wouldn't be able to carry on with our mission to protect fish and fishing.

We have another opportunity for questions now:'

Questions and answers:

Question from Russell Hicks: I note within the accounts for Fish Legal an itemised line for recovered costs. Where is the equivalent for the costs endured for lost legal cases?

Answered by Roland Caley: This happens very rarely Russell, and if a material amount, is treated as a separate 'exceptional' item. Since I joined in 2015 there has been one such item (£25K).

George Graham: We don't lose very many cases and we didn't lose any last year, so there isn't a specific line in the accounts. It has tended to be treated as an exceptional item because there have been so few of them. However next year's accounts will show a loss of £5,000 on the Environment Agency (EA) case referred to earlier, diffuse agricultural pollution

plans. The judgement was strange, as the judge agreed that when the EA promised to produce the plans six years ago that was a legally binding and enforceable agreement. But the judge also said that the EA could reasonably plead poverty, Brexit, Covid, etc as an excuse for not having done anything in the six intervening years. We lost the case and therefore have to pay a small contribution to the EA budget. It sticks in my throat, but it will be in the accounts next year.

Fish Legal Committee AGM 2021 - Ends

Highlights of the work undertaken by the Angling Trust in 2021

Welcome from Jamie Cook, Chief Executive Officer:

'Thank you George Graham and George Stephenson. We will be showing a series of short videos to give a flavour of the breadth of the work undertaken by the Angling Trust, which the membership support makes possible. There has been significant growth in membership in the last year. At time of the last AGM we were still battling the national lockdowns. In January 2021 we were informed that angling would be prohibited, but we had been building an evidence base that demonstrated that angling was part of the solution, not the problem in the lockdown scenarios as an option for those unable to participate in high intensity sport. We were able to contact government and explain the position to them and within 24 hours they reviewed the position and withdrew the decision to prohibit angling. That was a fantastic watershed moment for the Trust, having established ourselves as credible in dealing with three different government departments. Sport England had acknowledged the tangible difference we were having as a sport on policy drafting. Other sports waited for decisions and then argued against them with petitions, without success. We were proactive at every step of the way.

A year has gone by, but we are not out of the woods yet, there are still challenges ahead, but rest assured that the Angling Trust will continue to represent you at that highest level to ensure that your rights and ability to fish in line with any guidance are fought for and maintained.

I have asked the teams to put together a series of videos from each division. As an organisation what we haven't been brilliant at in the past is explaining exactly what we do. When I applied for the job I couldn't believe the amount of work that went on behind the scenes that I wasn't aware of. My father was an ACA member and I was an ACA member growing up, I have been really struck by the amount work covered by the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. I see Fish Legal as a sleeping giant in this industry and you will see a lot more from us moving forward.

The first video is from our Campaigns Team, one of the things to highlight is the work undertaken to redress the balance between the work in freshwater and sea water. Some of our partners will not invest in a marine environment, but my view is that the presence of salt in the water, should not change the nature of the delivery the Angling Trust offers. Hopefully you will have seen this year a step change where our Campaigns team are resourced to deliver in these areas. The example of the Bluefin Tuna project, which has been a brilliant success, where the Angling Trust has worked with Steve Murphy and his tireless efforts to deliver the project. We have also been working with David Curtis around Bass stocks which is another example. It goes beyond policy and looking at the Get Fishing programme, which pre-Covid 19 was delivering 37,000 new anglers each year and which now also applies to sea fishing as well as freshwater angling. This is a real step change and as we move towards 2022 and onwards, our competitions delivery, I hope what you see is new exciting opportunities to work with sea angling clubs.

Whilst we try to resolve some technical difficulties, we will look at a question received from Nigel Philips:

Question from Nigel Philips: As many events generating large payouts to participants are organised by content creators and influencers publicising on social media accounts e.g. YouTube, Instagram etc, would it be possible for the Trust to provide this content thus generating income.

Answered by Jamie Cook: Absolutely yes Nigel, we are fully reviewing our competitions programme and both sponsorship and media promotion are two key development areas - we have made some progress but there is a lot more planned. As the Angling Trust we now have trade members from across the sport who are directly investing in our work and in addition

as we continue to promote the benefits of the sport to a wider audience we are starting to engage with potential partners from outside of our core market. Where we can generate further income or reduce fixed costs as a not-for-profit organisation we can invest back into what our member want, be that larger prize pots, greater support for our international teams or other areas.

Response from Nigel Philips: Thank you for your reply, perhaps it would be possible to have a charging structure in respect of those companies/individuals using the Trust's content on their channels who benefit financially from that content as any private company would charge for copyright purposes.

Response from Jamie Cook: Yes, it would be an option, but we are not a private company and part of our objects is to engage as many anglers as possible. There are examples where distribution rights will be important because of the interest in pushing some of the content out and which cases there would be a payment involved, which would be invested back and would include exclusivity. However, when you look at the reach around social media, personally I think it is fantastic to see some of the top competition anglers, not just in our competitions, as it is important to the sport that there is wide choice of competitions across a breadth of areas. New organisers have come on board in the last year and have innovated, which is welcome, there is space for all of us. We have no desire to have a monopoly on competition delivery. Our competitions are slightly different, they offer a different service to a wider group and having high profile advocate anglers putting content out through social media talking about how much they have enjoyed the event or how well it has been run or understanding where the investment is going, is a positive.

You are right that there are two sides to it and with some of the bigger events in which there is significant interest in pushing wider coverage and we would certainly look at that.

'We will try again to run the videos:'

Campaigns Video

'Sorry for the delay, but I am glad we were able to see the video. It paints the picture that threats to our sport don't always come through animal sentience or sewerage or agriculture pollution, but can be a lot closer to home. At grass roots, if you are a member of a club it is difficult and we need to explain that just because your club is a member, doesn't mean you as an individual are directly contributing to the work that we doing. As seen by the Bromley case that I was personally involved with – I had a number of anglers contact me directly to talk about the impact that it had had on them. It was a really important community-led piece of work that we were able to run and support centrally. We saw the impact and the troubles the club had had in gaining engagement. We stepped in and managed to elevate the issue and saw a groundswell in support from the anglers who had never before seen an impact of the Angling Trust on the ground. It's a pity that you have to have the threat to trigger people to join. But it was positive to see the impact we could have.

One final point before we move on, is to thank the trade partners in this area. The Anglers Against Pollution campaign has been hugely successful and I need to thank Orvis for their ongoing support. Orvis contribute 5% to nature and 5% of any purchases from their pro range of goods goes into the work of Anglers Against Pollution. There are a number of other trade organisations who are

supporting the Angling Trust, which has been a big step-change over the last year with them supporting us in different areas of the work that we do, to promote the sport that they are all invested in.

Before we move on, we have another question, which I am happy to answer now:'

Question from Steve Dorks: Am I right in thinking you just stated that running competitions operates at a loss after you have paid money towards various national teams to the tune of 120k

And if so does this take into account the revenue collected for membership.

What is your estimated figure for anglers that purely pay membership in order to enter the aforementioned competitions, and shouldn't this be offset against the loss?

Response from Jamie Cook: It does take that into account. The estimate is based on an internal metric which is that every paying member (senior, adult, junior) who purchases one or more competitions tickets within the financial year. That gives a figure of around 2700 individual members who purchase one or more tickets for the competitions that we run. Therefore the contribution to membership from competition anglers is circa £74,000. I will let Roland confirm the figures.

Roland Caley: The forecast figures for 2021-22 includes 2428 individuals across all categories, predominantly adults paying £29 per year, which equates to £65,008. We also have a number of clubs that join for club competitions (£8,200), giving a total of £73,000 collected from those members who enter competitions.

Jamie Cook: The figure of £74,000 is the total from individuals and clubs, which is based on a broad assumption that if you join the Angling Trust and you buy a ticket to a competition we count that contribution in that bracket. It is not completely accurate, for example I have bought a ticket this year, but I am not a dyed in the wool competition angler, my membership is to support the campaign work, but is a best guess. We have made a £25,000 contribution to International Teams this year, which wasn't applied across the board, as not every team travelled, meaning we were able to contribute more to those that did. We make the investment of over £120,000 into competitions which includes the assumption of £73,000 going into the branch account from membership income.

Reply from Steve Dorks: Worse fears realised. Thankyou.

Comment from Kelvin Allen: Kelvin wished to give a vote of thanks to both Angling Trust and Fish Legal for the great work they have done in supporting anglers in the issues around Hoveton Great Broad and the fish barriers that Natural England wish to install.

Response from George Graham: Thanks to Kelvin for the comment. Unfortunately, it is not over yet. We have a long way to go before we can claim success on this. We managed to stop the initial charge, but Natural England and the Environment Agency are not our friends on this one and I don't think the battle is won yet.

Jamie Cook: It is another example where the Angling Trust and Fish Legal working alongside one another, have to stand up to points in principle where regulators either display an anti-fish position or are taking an action that we directly opposed to. There are two angles, one being campaigning and one being legal. It is critical that we can work in collaboration across the two organisations to be able to put pressure on from both sides. I am mystified by the Hoveton position, I think I understand some of the background beyond the ecological arguments behind it. I cannot understand how Natural England can justify taking two species, roach and bream, that are native and have been here since the Ice Age, taking them from their natural spawning grounds as a piece of environmental policy. We will take every step

that we can to protect the rights of the anglers and show the impacts to the community. I thank Kelvin for his support. It doesn't stop here and there are conditions on the permits which will have to be upheld and we will continue to ensure that they are.

George Stephenson introduced the second video:

Get Fishing Video

Jamie Cook - 'This area of work is one which is close to all of our hearts, as we all started our journey somewhere. My initial thanks would have to go to the trade. When I joined the organisation I was told by others that the angling trade simply would not invest in the future of the sport in this way. But my experience couldn't have been more different, working with Angling Direct and with Shakespeare on the Get Fishing campaign, we have been able to put resource directly back into expanding delivery. Part of the result has been that we have been able to expand our Get Fishing programme delivery into saltwater. We are able to target specific under-represented groups and as was alluded to in the video this is just the start of an exciting three year strategy. Watch out in the New Year for announcements around further launches and progress in this area. 2022 looks like it will be the biggest yet and the key point for members is that we have a team of seven regional officers in our participation team, who are there to work with clubs, fisheries and individuals to run taster events. We don't provide a load of coaches and run everything on your water and take control – we work with the local partnerships and infrastructure, because whilst we can introduce people to the sport, if they are to continue participating in their local community it will be with their local club or fishery. We are there to facilitate their pathway into becoming life-long anglers. If you are interested in running something similar in your own water, be it saltwater or freshwater, please get in touch with our participation team. Details are on our website in the Get Fishing section and we have regional officers across the country available to help you.

We are going to look at Fisheries Enforcement in the next video. This is an emotive subject. The two areas of Fisheries Enforcement Services are the Voluntary Bailiff Service and the Building Bridges team. They are there as a support service not as a regulator and the Environment Agency checking licences and taking action. We are a community-led resource to join the dots between the police in the local community, targeting anti-social behaviour and protecting fisheries and the assets that we all rely on.'

Fisheries Enforcement Support Service (FESS) Video

Jamie Cook - 'The video expanded beyond the remit of the FESS, and it is nice to see the testimonials from members that we have had an impact with. The work that we do at grassroots with clubs and fisheries couldn't happen without the delivery from the enforcement team and our participation officers on the ground because they act as the direct contact for those clubs where working proactively together can drive real benefits for the local community.

I missed a video related to the participation team and would like to play that now.'

Get Fishing Testimonials Video

Jamie Cook – 'George Stephenson touched on this at the start, as we grow one of the elements is reinvestment, we are a not-for-profit organisation. What has been brilliant this year, and moving forward into next year, is that we don't deliver all of these things ourselves – we work with partners.

This sport/ pastime is built on a network of volunteers through clubs and fisheries, work parties and getting people into the sport in local areas. This means we don't try to do everything ourselves and as a community-based intervention we can work with partners and are able to invest more heavily than ever in partner delivery. For example, we invest in the Canal & River Trust Let's Fish programme, ensuring that it can continue to run on a slightly different delivery model. The same is true of Get Hooked on Fishing, as you saw in the video, it is a very focussed initiative that has brilliant outputs and we are proud to work alongside those partners for the benefit of the sport.

We will now see a video on the work of the Building Bridges team. This, for me, is a critical engagement area which has been a huge success and is an area that, in partnership with the Environment Agency and addressing concerns in local communities, we have been able to educate and engage anglers from different cultures. What has been fascinating for me is how other sports and NGBs have looked at this to look at how they can apply some of the learnings that we have developed from the Building Bridges campaign into their own community led initiatives. It is another area where we can show that angling has really led the way in community engagement and is something we are very proud of.'

Building Bridges Video

Jamie Cook –'We are very proud of our work in the Building Bridges team and I hope you are also starting to see the integration across the different parts of the organisation. People come to the sport from different places and for different reasons and we need to look at the ability of our sport to be open and inclusive. I hope as you see the different interventions you will see that they interlink quite heavily and cross-over in different ways.

On the subject of engagement, we will move on to cover our Fisheries Forums that we run across the country. This is one of the areas affected by lockdown, but the team did a fantastic job in turning them into on-line resources. We will hear a little bit from the team and the work they do and the physical forums are now coming back this year and have been very well attended. It is a brilliant opportunity for clubs, fisheries and individuals to engage directly with the work that we do at a local level. It also provides a platform for attendees to speak directly to the regulator and get a direct response from the Environment Agency

Fisheries Forums Video

Jamie Cook –'The final point of the video in relation to the work of Nevin [Hunter], Hannah [Rudd] and Stuart [Singleton-White] have done in partnership with volunteers across the marine sector represents a real step-change and the level of engagement we have seen in our sea angling forums that have been run across England and are moving into Wales next year, has shown the latent demand in terms of engagement with both ourselves and the IFCA's and the MMO, ensuring that sea anglers have a proper voice. We are really committed to this approach, and I have enjoyed attending the forums myself. They are an excellent way for us to help anglers see the work we are going their own communities, but also to give you a route to be able to hold the regulators to account through the work that we do in partnership. Alex [Clegg] is doing a fantastic job with his team and if you haven't been to one of these events yet, please check our website and find out when the next one is.

Moving on, I will come on to the Environment Team now. The team has grown in the time that I have been here I am delighted to say. We have two new members of staff to support Dr Emily Smith. The two areas covered are issues around bio-security and issues around litter. We are looking at the problems we have with invasive species, for example: giant hogweed and floating pennywort. They have a horrific impact on the waters and need to be managed appropriately, so having experts like Dr

Smith and her team, they are able to advise and work with local stakeholders, within the angling industry and beyond to address some of these challenges. I will let Emily tell us more:’

Invasive Species Video

Jamie Cook –‘It is a solid example of the partnership work that we carry out with local communities and the difference it can make. If you haven’t fished around or experienced any waters that are impacted by floating pennywort, it is a drastic impact and a complete loss of amenity in some cases so we have to take proactive action and if we can apply that from a central point and role it out locally we can impact fisheries and impact positively on the local fishing in those areas.

The final video we have today is around our Fisheries Management Advisors. One of the areas that often gets spoken about is predation in different forms, so we have taken really proactive steps in these areas. We have Jake [Davoile] in the south and Richard [Bamforth] in the north supporting fisheries and clubs with predation advice, particularly looking at cormorants and otters. They undertake site visits; work with clubs on funding applications, either via the Angling Improvement Fund (fishing rod licence sales) or other routes such as local community funds. They make a really tangible impact on those local clubs, which otherwise would be severely impacted. It is an area of work which is incredibly important for us to undertake:

Fisheries Management Advisors Video

Jamie Cook –‘I hope that you can see the grass-roots impact that we can have on the infrastructure that supports participation in the sport. Jake and Richard do a phenomenal job supporting fisheries, both when looking at fencing or different measures around cormorant licencing and the journey to ensure that the fences are maintained and managed appropriately. You can see things like trail cams to isolate the points of weakness; licences to trap within fenced fisheries, they are all important aspects of the service that we deliver.

That is it for our videos. The one area that we haven’t covered is competitions. The reason for that is that we are reviewing our competitions delivery and have some really exciting plans moving into 2022 and beyond for both our domestic programme and for Team England. We are working through the volunteer group who support us in all disciplines of coarse, game and sea angling around future plans, with an intention to launch the plans either later this year or early next year. More information will be provided in a separate forum, specifically for competition anglers.

Finally, my message is thank you to all of you, to our volunteers, to our members, we couldn’t do the work that we do without you. I hope you will have seen that we are an organisation of both experts in their field and anglers, we do this because we are passionate about the sport that we all love and I hope the videos have gone a little way to show you just how passionate we are about the work that we do, so thank you.

Closing Statement from George Stephenson:

‘Thank you Jamie, very much indeed. I would conclude from the videos that you and your team have made some excellent presentations which showcase the breadth of work and significant impact that the Angling Trust and Fish Legal have contributed over the past year and will continue to do so moving forwards. The fish and fishermen and women of our country are very lucky to have you representing and standing up for them. This has been highlighted more than ever in the past year by the very successful approach and management of angling during the pandemic, also by the outstanding successes achieved by Fish Legal particularly in making polluters pay, and of course the increase in membership across the board, participation and support (for the most part!) on social

media – all of these things, when added together, have helped develop a far more unified organisation that has a purpose, means business and we can be proud of! Well done and thank you.

On that note, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not aware of any outstanding questions and I would like to thank you again for your time and your support, which is vital to us - I hope that you have enjoyed our meeting today, but I also hope our next AGM will be in person and with lunch - until then I trust you all keep well, stay safe and enjoy tight lines wherever you might go fishing'

Meeting Closed at 12:15pm

Angling Trust/Fish Legal AGMs 2021

In Attendance:

George Stephenson
George Graham
Jamie Cook
Roland Caley
Alistair Middleton
Karen Watkinson
Lee Cousins
Paul Edwards
Philip Hancox
David Curtis
Oliver Smith
Paul Slater
James Meadows
Mike Smith
Philip Chamberlain
Stuart Singleton-White
Reg Philips
David Marshall
John Cheyne
Howard Taylor
Martin Oxby
Tim Macpherson
Stephen Beverley
Jenny Smith
Peter Emery
Neil Berry
Dimitar Kotrabakov
Kelly Latimer
Dave Rogers
Mark Summerfield
David Kent
Mike Andrews
Richard Vincent
Steve Dorks
Sarah Collins
Ian Wilks
Colin Davies
Russel Hicks
Philip Reade
Huw Powell
Kelvin Allen
Peter Mottram
Brian Owen
Penny Gane
Nigel Phillips
Pippa Medd
Peter Davis
Steve Frost

Clubs in Attendance:

Edge Angling Club
Donington Angling Club
Asfordby and Melton Society of Anglers
Darent Valley Trout Fishers
South Coast Angling
Shoreham Harbour Arms
Dolgarrog Fishing Club
Avon and Tributaries AA
Broads Angling Services Group CIC